The Place-Names of Oxfordshire by Henry Alexander
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Beowulf asks Hrothgar to send back his armour to Hygelac if he falls in battle, the reference is surely not to any thought that Hygelac might put the armour in a grave with a cenotaph in honour of the dead warrior, but to the well-known practice of 'heriot' whereby the arms of the retainer were restored to his lord after death—but such mistakes are rare.

The translator has done his work well. The only serious slip would seem to be the use of 'Norseman' on pp. 8 and 58, where 'Northman' is the term required. In addition to the translation Dr Hall has given us a sound introduction, some good critical notes on points of doubtful interpretation, and an index of *realien* reprinted (and expanded) from his own prose translation of Beowulf. The illustrations here and throughout the book reflect great credit on the printer.

ALLEN MAWER.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

The Place-names of Oxfordshire. By HENRY ALEXANDER. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1912. 8vo. 251 pp.

In the author's Note or Preface we are told that this book was originally a dissertation in the School of English Language of the University of Liverpool. Professor Wyld, who contributes an Introduction, has reason to be well satisfied with the work of his pupil, Mr Alexander, which will take rank as one of the most scholarly studies yet published in the investigation of English place-names. As might have been expected, the phonological side of the enquiry has claimed the lion's share, and the main results are set out with great clearness in Part I of the author's Introduction. In Parts II, III and IV we are given valuable notes on change of suffixes, levelling of suffixes, popular etymology, O.E. elements of the names, together with peculiarities of M.E. orthography. In the appendices there are alphabetical lists of personal names and words other than personal names used as first elements, also a list of second elements and finally a bibliography. The investigation of the names, which occupies the main part of the book, is conducted in the great majority of instances on sound lines, and the 'imagination' displayed is of a commendably sober quality. Mr Alexander has however in not a few instances started with what we consider a fanciful or demonstrably incorrect explanation and afterwards thrown in, casually as it were, the fruit of a sounder judgment. The following criticisms and suggestions have occurred to the reviewer in reading through the book.

Abesditch *or* Avesditch: Dr Bradley's suggestion, O.E. *efes* 'border of a wood,' cannot be accepted for the first element, as it would give Eaves. We may compare Avishayes, Dorset and Somerset, also Austhwaite, Cumb., a 13th century form of which is *Auesthwayt.* The first element is probably a personal name such as *Ælf-*. Britwell can hardly

mean 'the bright well,' judging by the early forms, which have mostly *Bru-*; whereas in Brightwell, with which Mr Alexander compares Britwell, the early forms are nearly all in *Bri-*. On p. 64 we are told that *Broynes* 'undoubtedly expresses the 17th cent. pronunciation of this diphthong,' i.e. the diphthong which in the 16th century developed from [ī]. This is incorrect, as [oi] or [ɔi] from [ī] did not take place until much later, and then only in London and S. provincial speech. The first element of Burcot is not explained. Charlbury is explained as 'the town of the "churls"'; but what meaning can be attached to this expression, if O.E. *ceorl* meant 'labourer, servant (on a farm),' as we are told on p. 73? Under Chastleton Mr Alexander says 'the dictionaries explain this (O.E. *stān-ceastl*) as "chestnut-tree," but there is nothing to prove that it does not mean a cairn or a cromlech.' The dictionaries are right; *-ceastel*, which occurs also as *cistel*, *cisten*, *cist*, *cyst*, is from Lat. *castanea*; see these forms in Bosworth-Toller. It is doubtful whether O.E. *tūn* in place-names ever means 'an enclosed group of homesteads out of which the village and town later sprung' (p. 75). The development in meaning of *tūn* in place-names and its development as a separate word went probably on different lines. The suggestion of O.E. *cine* or *cinu*, 'a chink,' 'fissure,' 'chasm,' 'cavern,' to explain the first element of Chinnor is, we think, not to be received. A personal name, such as *Cyne-*, is more probable. *Chinestan* occurs for *Cynestan* in a charter (*cit.* Searle). On pp. 79, 92, etc., O.E. *ham(m)* is explained as 'an enclosure,' but there is no evidence whatever that it had such a meaning. The suggested explanation of Cookley as 'the growing (quick) meadow,' O.E. (*æt*) *cucan* (*cwican*) *lēage* would have been better omitted. The alternative given, the personal name *Cuca*, is much more probable. The suggested explanation of Cornwell as 'the spring next the cornfield,' is, we think, extremely unlikely. Nor do we think Crawley means 'the meadow of the crows'; nor that Crowmarsh was named after the bird. Even in Crowsley Mr Alexander does not wholeheartedly see a personal name. There is no real evidence that Draycott could mean 'an isolated homestead' and Drayton 'an isolated "tūn."' We do not feel satisfied that Ducklington is 'the hill of the ducklings,' unless the 'ducklings' were men; nor that Forest Hill means 'the frosty hill'; nor that Foxcott or Foscott means 'the fox-dwelling.' Mr Alexander has not noticed that the first element of Garsington occurs in Gressingham, Lancs., and is explained by Wyld as 'grass field.' The *d* of Handborough is hardly 'the result of a combinative sound-change'; but is more probably a modern fanciful or 'etymological' spelling. The Pipe Roll form *Hageneƀga* is obviously the oldest of those given, and at once points to the old and well attested pers. n. *Hagana*, *Hagena*, *Hagona*, as the first element, not to *Hana*. Hanger Hill (near Caversfield) and Hunger Hill (near Bicester) are taken to be the same name and are derived by Mr Alexander from O.E. *hangra*, 'a wood growing on the side of a hill-top.' Mr Alexander, like the editors of the Crawford Charters, and Dr Skeat, is of opinion that Hunger has developed from

Hangra. This is not possible. Skeat derives Hungerford, Berks., from *hangra*, although all the early forms he cites show *u*, not *a*. The form Hunger- is clearly the personal name *Hungær* or *Hungar* (see Searle). Mr Alexander's statement that *hungra* is identical with '*hangra* but in a different Ablaut grade,' seems a declension from his usual high level of philological acumen. 'Ablaut grade' is a sort of *deus ex machina*, which must not be invoked too frequently. The 1261 form *Clehungre* for modern Clayhanger is due to the common scribal confusion between *a* and *u*. Hempton is explained as '(at) the high enclosure' from O.E. *æt hēan tūne*. The change of *n* of earlier forms to *m* of 14th century and modern forms, is hardly to be accounted for by 'the analogy of the word *hām*.' Possibly the first element was *Hefn*, from *Hefan*, gen. case of the personal name *Hefa*; *fn* became *mn*, *m* in O.E. as in *emn*, *stemn*. In Heyford and Heythrop Mr Alexander seems to think that O.E. *hege* means simply 'hedge.' This was doubtless the original meaning, but it came to be generally used for a space enclosed in a forest and then a forest-clearing; see Vinogradoff, *Engl. Soc. in 11th Cent.*, p. 292. In connection with Hoar Stone, from O.E. *hār stān*, the question arises, whether our ancestors may not have lime-washed the boundary stones to make them more visible. They may also have lime-washed fruit-trees to keep off insects; this would account for *hār apulder* in a charter. The article under Holmwood needs revision, as O.E. *holm* never means 'hill.' The first sentence in Bosworth-Toller *s. v. holm*, cited by Mr Alexander, should be deleted, as it is absurd. Middendorf, also cited, is hardly an authority to quote for *meanings* of O.E. words, as he is frequently in error. The word *holm*, very common in Northern place-names, and derived from O.N. *holmr*, has one or two quite definite meanings which are given in the English Dialect Dictionary. Another explanation suggested by Mr Alexander, that *holm* is a variant for M.E. *holin*, 'holly,' is clearly the right one. In some mod. E. dialects 'holm' is commonly used for holly: see E.D.D. Holton hardly means 'the nook or hidden settlement'; it means, judging by the early forms, simply 'piece of land on a "hale" or "haugh,"' i.e. 'low-lying level ground by the side of a river,' as the E.D.D., cited by Mr Alexander, tells us. The suggestion, scorned by Mr Alexander, that Iffley, early forms of which are *Gifetelea*, *Givetelei*, means a 'field of gifts,' has perhaps something to be said in its favour. The O.E. *gift* means 'sum of money or its equivalent offered or paid by a suitor to his bride's family.' The suggested meaning of O.E. *slæp*, quoted from Bosworth-Toller, 'a slippery, miry place?' cannot be accepted. The dial. word *slap* means 'a narrow pass between two hills'; 'a gap or temporary opening in a hedge, fence, &c.' See E.D.D. Another possible suggestion for Kidlington is *Cytel*, a common O.E. name from O.N. *Ketel*. A possible origin for Mixbury is the personal name *Meoc*; *Meoces dun* occurs in a charter. The name Murren in Newnham Murren may be the personal name *Morwine*, which occurs in a charter (Searle). Play in Play Hatch may be *Pleg-*, the first element of personal names, as Plegmund, Plegbeorht, etc. The first element

of Swinbrook and Swyncombe, judging by some of the early forms, is perhaps a personal name *Swegen*, O.N. *Sveinn*, rather than O.E. *swīn* 'swine.' Taston is perhaps the personal name *Thurstan*, *Thorstan*, O.N. *Þorsteinn*, the terminal having dropped off. The first element of Tusmore may be *Turri* or *Tori*, short forms of *Þored* (*cit.* Searle), rather than *Thōr*. The change from *swu-* to *su-*, as in *Sulung* from *Swulung*, is not a parallel, as Mr Alexander thinks it is, to *Ty-* from *Twi-*, as in Tythrop from **Twiþorp*. Warborough cannot mean 'the fortress where watch was kept,' seeing that the early forms *Weardesburg*, *Weardœs beorh* show the genitive case of the first element. The name probably means 'Ward's grave-mound.' Under Wolvercote it is said that place-names such as Wolverton, Wolvershill, Wolverhampton, 'may have had an influence on the consonant in *Wolgercote*,' i.e. caused *v* to be substituted for *g*. Such an influence is hardly conceivable as being exerted by names in other parts of England. Another possible origin for the first element of Woodlays is O.E. *wiþig*, 'withy,' as in Widford. The change of stress suggested on p. 228, viz. *ofértun* < *owérton* < Worton, is unparalleled, we fancy, and impossible. The initial *w* arose from the over-rounding of the *ō*, resulting in a bilabial continuant practically identical with [w], its formation being perhaps aided by the constant use of the preposition *to* [tu] immediately before the name.

Before concluding, we may be allowed to express the hope that writers on phonology may come to an understanding about the use of the symbols > and <. There has been a fairly well established practice by which > when used between two forms means that the second form developed from the first, while < means that the first form is a development from the second. Mr Alexander, like Professor Wyld, uses these symbols in exactly the reverse sense. In such matters uniformity is of some importance.

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Manchester.

Altnordische Namenstudien. By Hans Naumann. (*Acta Germanica.* Neue Reihe. Vol. I.) Berlin: Mayer and Müller. 1912. 195 pp.

In this volume we have a very valuable study of Old Norse personal names embodying the results of studies extending over the whole field of Teutonic personal nomenclature. Dr Naumann sets himself in the first instance to determine those themes in personal names which can be shown to be a common German inheritance, then he deals with those which are common to the North and West Germanic tongues, and finally with those which are exclusively North Germanic and with the very small number of themes found in East or West Germanic alone. He finds about a hundred and thirty-two themes which are common to the three groups, seventy-four compounds of these themes and twenty-seven diminutive forms which are also common. The most interesting of his results in this part of the book is the discovery that there are a great